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Three Years' War for Peace

by Basil Mathews

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THREE YEARS' WAR FOR PEACE

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THREE YEARS' WAR FOR PEACE

BY

BASIL MATHEWS, M.A.

NEW YORK
GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY

D
525
M33
1917a

TO

ERNEST BRAITHWAITE

Second-Lieutenant
14th Royal Warwickshire
Regiment

Missing, believed killed: July 22nd,
1916

"He was last seen leading his men into action under heavy fire."

"It is for us . . . to bring increased devotion to that cause for which these honoured dead have given the last full measure of devotion."—ABRAHAM LINCOLN AT GETTYSBURG.

PROLOGUE

To-day we are all asking the same question.

The miner as he flings down his pick, slings his coat over his shoulder and makes for home; the sweating steel-worker as he staggers back from the blaze of his furnaces; the girl with yellowing skin as she leaves her work in the high explosive factory; the city man opening his "War Final" in the suburban train at night; the mother at home, quivering with her dread of the ring at the door and the buff telegram of death—we all ask "How long? . . . When will the boys come home? When shall we win back to the days and ways of peace?"

And some ask further. "Why must we go on with the war? At home we have now been at the tension of time and overtime for years. And the boys at the Front and on the high seas. . . . Is it worth the treasure of life that we are pouring out daily? Why not stop now?"

The spirit of the answer to that question came in a letter from a brother of mine at the Front. His whole life is bound up with his home—his wife and three splendid children. His longing to be back with them is on him all the time. He

loathes war with a daily increasing rebellion. Yet in his latest letter home he writes: "It must seem strange—and I hope you will not misunderstand—but I don't want to be home out of this business *until we have put it through.*"

The answer to the question, "Why not stop now?" is there. The whole issue can be packed into a sentence which sums up the faith of our armies—the wildest and roughest of our men and the most sensitive alike: We must go on with the War because we do not want our children and grandchildren to have to wade afresh through all this blood and muck.

We, who still live on, look back now across the three most tremendous years in all the history of man. The fourth year will determine the destiny of mankind for a thousand years to come. The foul Thing that made the War is still in the saddle. It must be felled to the ground. The lives of all our children—of the world's children to all time—are to be made or marred by what we do or fail to do. If, then, having put our hand to this plough, we now turn back, our shame will go down from generation to generation without end.

Can we, however, begin to see where the long dreadful furrow will end? We are in the midst of the dust and toil, the blood and sweat of it all. Vision is blurred—and without the vision our ideals and our passion perish. The landmarks are hidden in the smoke of the battle. The great Voices are drowned in the clamour of our forges and the clatter of our looms.

With aching hands and bleeding feet
We toil and dig, lay stone on stone;
We bear the burden and the heat
Of the long day and wish 'twere done.

We shall "toil and dig" better if we can for a moment stand erect and get a glimpse of the goal.

This book is an effort to do that, to see, across the smoke and turmoil of the battle after three years of war, the fortunes of the day and the promise of to-morrow. To focus so vast a field in one picture eliminates a myriad details that are quite momentous in themselves; but the view may be no less true for that.

The book is not an argument, nor a detailed record. It is rather a moving picture of great events thrown on the screen—"lest we forget." Taking the answer to that question: "Why go on with the War?" as its goal, it looks back over the origin and trend of the War; tries to estimate the measure of the amazing transformation of our life to meet the War's demands; and stands reverently before the miracle of the sacrifice already made; it attempts to give a true "relief map" of the situation as a whole as it is, and to refresh our tired eyes with a forward view of the new world toward which we strain, that world for which our honoured dead have given their lives and for which our living have surrendered those whom they loved even more than life itself.

BASIL MATHEWS.

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THREE YEARS' WAR FOR PEACE

CHAPTER I

Into the Breach

It is not easy even now to grasp the grim, tremendous fact that we are making greater history than we can read.

As we look right across the history of man through all recorded time there is no moment that stands as peer to that in which the clock struck on August 4th, 1914, and the twelve days of fate ended.

In that hour the old world was broken up and melted down. From the Orkneys across Europe and Asia to New Guinea and Samoa, from the Yangtse across two oceans through America to the Zambesi and the Tigris, every land and people saw their familiar life shattered. For each a new epoch had opened. All future human life—labour, capital, commerce; government, social life, national being; our inter-racial relations—all date a new world from that midnight. Time itself was in travail.

I

The world-fire was kindled by three shots from a Browning pistol. In that sense the right hand of Prinzip (the Serb student of Austrian nationality who on June 28th, 1914, assassinated the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the Throne of the Austrian Empire, with his wife, when at Serajevo visiting the newly annexed provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina) has already slain its million men. But this murder, though it was made the immediate occasion of the War, was not its cause. The causes of the War were political, racial, diplomatic, and intellectual.

If any one political event above another led the Central Empires to precipitate war at that time it was that the Balkan War, by reviving a free Serbia, had thrown a mighty dam across the Eastward movement of the Germanic race. Serbia cut the Berlin-to-Bagdad line. She strangled the Hamburg-to-Basra land route to the East. Politically, then, this baulked passion of Germany for dominion in the Near East, as a decisive step in a struggle for world-empire, was the cause of the War. If we seek its racial origin we find that in the antagonism of Slav and Teuton. Diplomatically, as Sir Edward Grey said, war became inevitable through "the absence of good-will in Berlin."

But, in the last resort, as Lord Acton declared, "Ideas are the cause and not the result of public events." In that ultimate sense the cause of war was a philosophy of force and of "will-to-power,"

issuing in an ethic of savagery. That philosophy became incarnate in a centralised, despotic government in which the Army is supreme, and was propagated through a splendid educational system. It created as its tool a mighty scientific war-machine which, in the hand of the General Staff, is the true master of Germany. Its exponent of supreme power was Nietzsche. The historian who applied its principles to the State was Treitschke. It was reduced to military theory by men like von Bernhardi. Its origin was in Germany. But its missionaries were everywhere.

The whole trend of the diplomacy of Austria and Germany through the fateful "Twelve Days" from July 24th to August 4th deepens the conviction of their "will to war" into moral certainty.

On July 23rd, almost a month after the assassination, the Austrian Empire presented its drastic Note making demands on Serbia that would have reduced her to a vassal of Austria, which would thus automatically extend its rule to the borders of Greece and Bulgaria. That Note meant the absorption of a Slav people by a Teutonic Government. An answer was ordered within forty-eight hours. Germany, through her Ambassadors in London, Paris and Petrograd, declared her agreement with the terms of the Austrian Note. Russia, appealed to by Serbia as the greatest Slav Power, advised agreement to every demand, save two which meant national suicide. On July 25th, within an hour or so of receiving the Serbian reply, the Austro-Hungarian Minister left Belgrade,

which four days later was being bombarded by Austrian guns. Through the twelve days Sir Edward Grey "toiled terribly," first to secure peace, then to localise the conflict. He invited Germany to call a Conference and was refused. He tried every door and heard the key of rejection grate in all. In return England was invited to stand aside while France was smitten to the ground and robbed of her colonies, and while Belgian neutrality was broken. The infamous suggestions were rejected.

In 1911, 1913 and on July 31st, 1914, Germany through responsible Ministers had declared that she would observe the Treaty of 1839 to respect Belgian neutrality. Yet on August 2nd the Minister (who three days earlier, on July 31st, had declared, in reply to an inquiry from the Belgian Government, that he was certain that Germany adhered to her pledges) presented a Note to the Belgian Government demanding a passage through Belgium for the German Army on pain of instant declaration of war. On the evening of August 3rd the German troops crossed the frontier.

The Imperial Chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg, in the Reichstag engraved on eternal brass the infamy of Germany:—

"We are now in a state of necessity, and necessity knows no law. . . . We were compelled to override the just protest of the Luxemburg and Belgian Governments. The wrong—I speak openly—that we are committing we will endeavour to make good as soon as our military goal has been reached. Anybody who is threatened, as we are threatened, and

is fighting for his highest possessions, can have only one thought—how he is to hack his way through."

In those words and in the things done in Belgium in obedience to the German High Command, Prussianism in its mailed might assailed the very foundations of free life in the world. The ordinance that bound civilisation together was "rolled up like a scroll that is read."

II

"We worked for peace," declared Sir Edward Grey on August 3rd in the House of Commons, "up to the last moment and beyond the last moment. How hard, how persistently, and how earnestly we strove for peace the House will see from the papers that are before it.* But that is over so far as the peace of Europe is concerned."

It has been argued that immediate explicit decision by Britain to fling in the sword with Russia and France would have given pause to the Central Powers and so prevented war. If so, it would nevertheless merely have postponed war for a few years till Germany was stronger still on land and water. Frustrated though the efforts for peace were, their moral influence was so great that—looked at in perspective—they may prove to have been a determining element in the War. For they had a tremendous power in two directions. First, the rejection of those efforts by Germany, combined with the moral issue of the invasion of Belgium, brought into the War the full passion and weight

* British White Paper.

of the British Empire, whose whole structure was as exclusively organised for peace as Germany was organised for war. Secondly, those efforts won the general confidence of the neutral peoples in the honesty of Britain's purpose.

No man holds the clue to British policy who looks, in the Continental manner, for a coherent reasoned plan. Through the centuries of our strange record, the clue lies, not at all in a clearly conceived *Weltpolitik* rigorously followed, but in the spontaneous action of an instinct rooted in a conscience that blends Puritanism, business caution and chivalry. The British have gone wrong—when—as with the North American Colonies—a non-representative ruler (like our North-German drill-sergeant, George III.) has held the reins and driven counter to the national conscience. Our method is blundering, the instinct is sure. The defects of this way of government lie on the surface, like the warts on a giant oak. The strength lies hidden, where the sap flows silently through the tough roots and trunk to the growing branches.

No one of us will ever forget that 3rd of August on which Sir Edward Grey made his statement—the sunny Bank Holiday when the clouds of war massed themselves in a clear sky before our incredulous eyes, and the growl of the distant thunder rolled upon us. At the suddenly unmasked cannon's mouth instant life-and-death decision was demanded. The world's future trembled in the balance, though we could not in those early days realise to the full the stupendous issues that were at stake. We loathed the thought of war; but we chilled to

the marrow with the dread of a dishonourable peace. By a colossal paradox the Empire as it read Sir Edward Grey's statement was at once stunned and relieved beyond measure. We stood to lose the whole world—but not our soul.

On the instant the ranks of the Empire closed. The civil war that threatened Ireland was stilled by Germany as Ulsterman and Nationalist mobilised for France. The fierce energy that struggled for Votes for Women turned itself with heroic vigour into the channels of national war organisation. The hot angers of Labour and Capital fused in a glowing concentration against the bully of the world.

The riotous joy of the boulevards of Berlin had no parallel in London. The "dour" quiet of it all deceived even our Allies then and for long after into a wonder whether we really were "all in" for the War. But beneath the surface glowed a determination that, from the outset, meant (as we had shown a hundred years before in face of Napoleon when our allies one by one fell out of the ranks, but we held on) that we ultimately were there to the last man and the last penny. The bulldog is slow to anger and silent, but when the grip has once closed not even death unlocks the grim jaws.

Berlin that day pelted the windows of the British Embassy with stones, and the Emperor William sent a message to our Ambassador which showed that he shared with his Prussian people that curious inability to understand what civilised Europe knew five centuries ago—when the savages of North Ger-

many still offered human sacrifices in their uncouth haunts—and what the true Southern Germany knows full well, the meaning of chivalry, the gentleman's instinctive treatment of a foe, the gulf fixed between man and the "cad." While this happened in Berlin, British warships were piloting the German Ambassador (whose departure from London was watched by large and silent crowds) past German mines that were sown in British waters before war had been declared.

Our fleet steamed to its stations. Lord Kitchener was stopped with one foot on the gangway of the vessel that was taking him to Egypt, and was called back to London as Minister of War. Mobilisation was ordered. The smallest and most perfectly trained Army owned by any Great Power in the world concentrated—an army planned, trained and equipped for small border fighting in the remote places of the world. Lord Haldane, by his clear thought and his careful organisation, particularly in guiding Public School and Undergraduate energy into the Officers' Training Corps, in planning the dispositions of our Expeditionary Corps and their reserves, and in raising the Territorials, had lifted that little Army to a level of efficiency unequalled in its own history and unsurpassed elsewhere. Some 90,000 men with about 15,000 horses and 400 guns were instantaneously available.

Under the curtain of the nights up to August 13th the giant line of transports moved with stern, implacable strength across the grey waters. Their

defence lay in the unseen sentinel in the North Sea, the hidden blockade across the Bight of Heligoland. The men who in the twilight caught their last glimpse of the Isle of Wight saw the sun rise blood red over France. The "long ships" of the Empire—a world-commonwealth of free nations—had carried its pioneers into Armageddon.

In each man's pocket was Kitchener's message to his troops concluding with the immortal commands:—

"Be invariably courteous, considerate and kind. Never do anything likely to injure or destroy property, and always look upon looting as a disgraceful act. You are sure to meet with a welcome, and to be trusted; your conduct must justify that welcome and that trust. Your duty cannot be done unless your health is sound. So keep constantly on your guard against any excesses. In this new experience you may find temptations in wine and women. You must entirely resist both temptations, and, while treating all women with perfect courtesy, you should avoid any intimacy.

"Do your duty bravely.

"Fear God.

"Honour the King.

"KITCHENER, Field-Marshal."

They swung along the roads singing their song of "Tipperary" and startling France with their thunderous negative to the question, "Are we downhearted?" The gay people of France had gone grim at the opening of the war; but the Army of the nation that "takes its pleasures sadly" took its

war gladly—with a song and a laugh. We are always at our best when things are at their worst.

III

When our men landed, Belgium and France had already been fighting for ten days. On the very day when the German Ambassador in Brussels declared that his Government would respect Belgian neutrality, three Army Corps in the German field-grey were massing against her frontiers. The swift thunderbolt of Thor was to smash France through Belgium and then to swing back on Russia. Speed was of the first moment to Germany. A day lost might turn the fortunes of the world-war. We must, said the German Chancellor, "hack our way through."

Liége stood in the path. A scratch force hurriedly swept together manned its defences. Germany flung her men upon it. They were repulsed again and again. In two days the David of Europe had broken the long legend of the Prussian giant's invincibility. Then the mighty German guns smashed the twelve-foot concrete and the wrought-iron cupolas of the Liége forts like egg-shells. The guns had not been brought up at the outset because arrogant Germany despised her tiny adversary. That pride was a cause of the great fall; for it lost priceless days to Germany. From the south-eastern forts to the city, from the city to the north-west forts, General Leman drew back his men, but still held the gap. At last the heroic General was

dragged from the *débris* of his last fort and the long retreat began.

To recall and record the story of the reign of "frightfulness" in Belgium would be to chronicle the incredible, were not the facts overwhelmingly substantiated in all their details. In that verified record we see, not merely that savagery is reduced to a science, but that the world can never be safe till this new cancer is cut clean out of the body of humanity.

The cold catalogue is enough: a baby crucified with hands and feet outstretched, nailed like a rat to a barn; another baby carried aloft, skewered on a bayonet in a regiment of singing soldiers; girls violated again and again until they died; matrons, old men and priests slaughtered; men mutilated in ways that one man can hardly whisper to another; women and children thrust forward as a screen between "the gallant troops of Germany" and their enemy; organised massacre; the abuse of the Red Cross and the White Flag.* Everything that we thought secure among civilised men was defiled and destroyed—fidelity to the pledged word, reverence for age, the sanctity of womanhood, childhood and weakness; standards of honour, of justice and of clean fighting. And they were destroyed, not in an access of passion, but on a deliberate and calculated policy of "frightfulness." The soldiers who had, when they went to China, been ordered by their Kaiser to emulate the Huns under Attila, now outdistanced their model. The orders

*Report of the Committee on Alleged German Outrages . . . presided over by Lord Bryce.

of the General Staff and the execution of those commands stand without parallel.

The "frightfulness" was carried out to inspire a terror that would paralyse resistance. But the men of "blood and iron" had no imagination—they lacked elementary brain power in ultimate things. They had forgotten the soul of the world. So they are amazed that instead of inspiring terror they have lighted such a passion for freedom as the world has never known. The world now sees that a truly damned Thing is in the saddle in Germany, and if it is not unseated it will ride mankind, including the German people, with bit and bridle and bloody spur.

IV

So the grey armies of Germany, stretching across the Continent, "hacked a way through." Backed by a complete system of strategic railways, fitted with a plentiful supply of complete personal equipment, with every form of weapon in profusion from the rifle and the machine-gun to the monstrous cannon drawn by thirteen traction engines, with aircraft ranging from the Taube to the giant Zeppelin, and with a tradition of invincibility, stiffened by fine training and reinforced by great personal courage, it was the mightiest weapon of war that had ever been forged. And it was a weapon in the hand of the Great General Staff in which the finest brains of the specialised military caste were perpetually planning and replanning the very campaigns that were now being put to the test of reality.

The immediate sequel, the story of which has been re-written a thousand times, is one of the most amazing epics on a grand scale in the history, not merely of war, but of civilisation. The miracle is still inexplicable on rational grounds. The David of Belgium had hampered the giant's stride across Belgium, though the swift and unexpected fall of Namur left the Gideon's band of the British Expeditionary Force to fend the blow of five German Army Corps. Some 240,000 men converged on our exposed, unsupported, outnumbered ranks at Mons. The British flung back the advance attacks again and again. To have stayed would have made Mons a British Sedan. News came that the French line had been broken on the Sambre on the British right, and that their armies were in retreat. So the perilous withdrawal began, the story of which even to-day leaves a man aching with the anguish of those intolerable fatigues and thrilling with pride at the unbroken spirit of the men. Back to the west and the south the tired troops moved, holding up the foes in the costly battle of Le Cateau, trailing away over the rolling hills and running rivers, and with the enemy always at their heels, till the Eiffel Tower revealed to German eyes the goal they sought. The line-up between the Marne and Paris began.

At that hour the world stood on the tiptoe of suspense and held its breath. From Shanghai and Sydney to Calcutta and Cape Town, from New York and Toronto to Petrograd and Rome, men waited in intolerable expectation of the fall of Paris. General de Castelnau on August 25th took the Ger-

mans in flank and won the battle of Grand Couronné. Von Kluck swerved to the centre, believing—it may well be—that the British Army was broken. The French armies and our own were locked in a deadly wrestle with the German line through those early September days—days that will loom larger and larger upon the mind of the world as they grow more distant. There has been no more decisive hour since the Turk was flung back from Vienna by Sobieski nearly two and a half centuries ago. At last the German grip relaxed and they turned their backs upon the Paris which lay so near and yet on that day for ever beyond their grasp. That it was so and is so remains and will remain a miracle.

The allied advance began. We drove the German forces from the Marne across the Aisne into the trenches of that tortuous line from Dunkirk to Belfort which is now engraved with acid on the mind of the world.

The German victory as planned by the General Staff was smashed, although from Tannenberg to the Sambre they had fought successful and resounding battles. Victory in war is to put your opponent out of action either by smashing or containing his forces. Germany could never in this war do that. The Entente had fought for and secured time. It remained to use that time to the full compass of the event.

CHAPTER II

The Transformation of Britain

The Allies had fought for and had secured time —time so priceless that to waste an hour of it was treachery. Behind the thin line of tested steel in Flanders and France and behind the shield of her Navy, Britain began that transformation of her whole life which stands without parallel in history.

Britain's unpreparedness, which stood as an unimpeachable witness to her innocence of planning the War, made the needed change of her entire way of life greater than in any other nation involved in the War. The revolution transformed her social, industrial and political life with a completeness that defies analysis and baffles imagination. The change is not simply, as it were, either mechanical or chemical; it is organic; it goes to the roots of life. The most continuous, unbroken national life in the world has not suffered revolution, but has perpetrated revolution upon itself.

I

The first and deepest element in that change is the personal * dedication of life. There is nothing

* The Imperial contribution is dealt with in a separate chapter.

known to us which we can set up by way of comparison with that voluntary enlistment of over five million men. If the sacrifice of everything for others is the moral principle of religion, the enlistment of these millions of our men stands as the greatest religious act in British history.

The Universities for the first time in their long centuries of history emptied themselves. They did so instantaneously. Irresponsible, high-spirited, pleasure-loving undergraduates swung in without a breath of hesitation, took unspeakable hardships without a murmur, shouldered responsibilities on which great issues hung, lived strenuously and died gallantly. Students who lived for the increase of knowledge and for the service of man; gentle, industrious scholars, whose manliness and grace saturated all their life, went out to endure fatigues and to command men. They surrendered books and music, the flights of thought, the contemplation of history, pictures and all the pleasant warfare of argument, for a life in the mud and strain of the drilling ground and the route march, in all the grind and rasp and elemental brutishness of war. To these men the call that was irresistible lay, not so much in the things for which the superb professional soldier like Kitchener stood, but in the clean, straight policy of Grey. His speech on August 3rd placed the men of our ancient Universities in the Army. They simply accepted the evidence. Their enlistment was the absolute dedication of the young leadership of an empire to a single purpose.

The unanimity was not limited to any class or

type. From factory and warehouse, city office and farmyard, schoolhouse and shop-counter; from tram and omnibus, railway and mine, the men poured in till the enlistments of a single day surpassed the pre-war enrolment of a year. The flood of men overwhelmed the military machinery of the country. When the news from Flanders was at its worst, enlistment swelled to its best. In thousands of homes where the advocacy of world-peace had been the genuine absorption of all the thought that was given to foreign affairs, every male member of military age sprang to his place in the new Army.

If that personal enlistment on a national scale was the first and most dramatic element in our revolution, the adoption, with hardly a dissentient voice, of compulsory military service was a stern witness to the national determination to carry the War through to a victorious conclusion. The surrender of personal freedom in ultimate things to military control is as deep a sacrifice and as thorough a break with all historic principle as could be demanded of Britain. It was made, not to coerce the shirker, but to set up a universal standard of reference as to where a man's true duty lay.

Less conspicuous than the enlistment of the men, but as heroic and complete, was the self-offering of the girlhood and womanhood of the country. To-day women from every walk of life have put aside the dainties and domesticities that grace life, in order to tread the furrows of the farm, stoop over whirling lathes, shovel nitrate of soda, fill

shells with high explosive, "man" railway trains, trams and omnibuses, make aeroplane wings, drive motors, mould bricks, crush coal, fire kilns and in a thousand ways to replace the men who have gone. The women of England to-day literally hand out to the armies the guns, shells, cartridges and food without which the Army would wilt in a week. It is not too much to say that the women of England are largely responsible for putting over the bombardment—the barrage that has made each new advance possible at the Front.

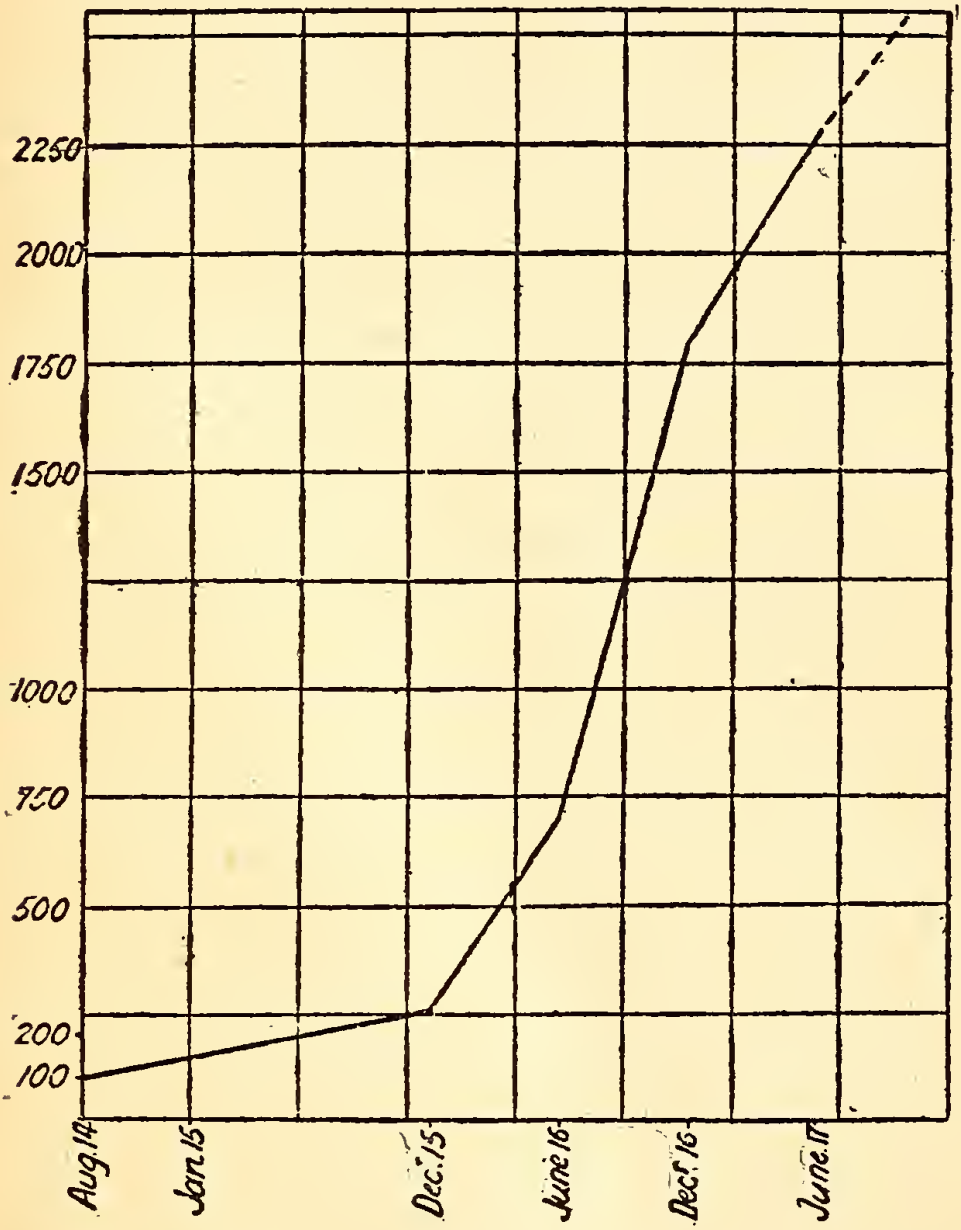
II

This brings the story of transformation to its mechanical and industrial element—the reconstruction that has made Britain one vast armament factory. At the beginning of the War Britain's ammunition needs were served by three Government factories and a few auxiliary private firms. How often in the early period of the War our gunners sat gloomily by their batteries, being pounded by shells, and with none of their own for a reply!

The story of what has been done here baffles the utmost stretch of the mind. In the spring of 1917 the capacity for producing high explosive was twenty-eight times as great as in the spring of 1915, and the cost was barely one-third per ton of the early War charges. A single section of this one department of the Ministry of Munitions supplies to the Food Production Department, as a by-product,

all the artificial manures required for the agriculture of the country.

The curve of weekly output here reproduced will indicate graphically the change that has taken place



in the production of completed gun ammunition. New explosives have been discovered, all the technical difficulties of their manufacture eliminated, the supply speeded up, and as a result our soldiers

have moved on to the ridges of Vimy and Messines from which the Germans had pounded them with shell for more than thirty dreadful months.

These guns and this ammunition roar from the Italian and Russian fronts as well as in Flanders and France, in the Balkans and in Palestine, on the banks of the Tigris and in the jungle of Africa.

Over and above these things, whereas at the beginning of the War we could only make 10 per cent. of the glass for optical instruments that we required for ourselves, we can now do all that we need and provide substantial assistance to our Allies. Our entire and paralysing dependence on Germany for potash has been broken by a discovery which puts the supply of more than all our needs into our own hands.

Tanks and super-tanks, with still more yet unrevealed inventions to follow; railway engines and railway lines for the immense network of new strategic lines behind the Front; a myriad motor lorries; agricultural implements for widening the range of harvest; these have all been provided by the Army behind the Army, the industrial array of Britain. The supply of aeroplanes has been doubling every six months. From abroad some 1,500,000 tons of munition supplies come every month with an average loss, since the beginning of the "ruthless submarine campaign"—as Dr. Addison informed us on June 28th, 1917—of at the most 5.9 per cent. by submarine warfare. The annual output of British steel has risen from seven million tons to ten millions and is still increasing.

To state the industrial revolution that followed the bitter munitions lesson of the second Battle of Ypres, we can take another series of concrete instances, holding in mind *the product of the whole of the first year of war* as the unit for comparison. The British arsenals put out in 1917 as many heavy Howitzer shells in a single day as in the whole first year of war, as many medium shells in five days, and as many field-gun shells in eight days. In high explosives and in heavy guns every three days in 1917 produced the total output of the first year of war. The new national projectile factories in 1917 had a total length of over fifteen miles of an average breadth of forty feet, with more than ten thousand machine tools driven by seventeen miles of shafting with an energy of twenty-five thousand horse-power and a weekly output of over ten thousand tons weight of projectiles. The increase of output continues steadily and shows no sign of reaching its limits. What is more, Britain is so instinctively true to her history that in all planning of new arsenals the thought of turning them into productive industrial centres, when war is over and peace returns, is held steadily in mind.

III

We reach perhaps the deepest and most difficult of all elements in the British transformation when we discover that of the five hundred different processes in munition work upon which women are engaged some three hundred and fifty had never been performed by a woman before 1915. The

significance there lies, not primarily in the swift training of women to these difficult technical tasks, nor in their readiness to undertake the work. It lies in the fact that the millions of men who through decades of travail have built up a trade union system in defence of their own rights, have surrendered their hardly won positions for the purposes and for the period of the War. The acceptance by the trade unions of extensive dilution of labour, involving the influx of women and non-union workers into exclusive and privileged categories of skilled industry, fills us with something of the astonishment which would hail the break-up of Indian caste. It is a corporate and deliberate sacrifice on a national scale. And without that sacrifice the whole Alliance would inevitably have been defeated in the War. We owe a debt of honour to those men which must be recognised in action after the War.

We had before us this task, "to improvise the impossible." The miracle is not that we made a score of blunders, but that the impossible came true, the incredible happened. England became a new people, just because "England to herself was true."

IV

So when men ask "What is England doing in the War?" we ask from the bottom of our hearts, "What is she not doing?" A nation wedded to peace, a people that never wished for or expected war with Germany—a country not invaded, and sheltered by an invincible fleet—a land with an

immemorial tradition against compulsory military service, materially wealthy, with everything to lose and little enough to gain—what has she done?

Her Fleet, with a vastly increased strength, and its *personnel* increased from 136,000 before the War to something approaching 400,000, has swept the seas free of the enemy on the surface, and is in incessant war upon her foe beneath the sea. Her Fleet and her heroic Merchant Service have borne year in, year out, from the ends of the earth to her Allies and herself, the supplies without which Germany would have triumphed before the Christmas of 1914.

By July, 1915, two million men had voluntarily enlisted. Britain, at length, surrendered her birthright of freedom, and accepted compulsory service. To-day her armies hold the foe in three continents and on six fronts, and are co-operating with her Allies on two others. Her guns confront the enemy on the whole vast steel circuit of this colossal siege. Her tens of thousands lie in their graves from the Tigris, the Ægean and the Zambesi, to the Somme, the Aisne and the Yser, and still the dreadful daily toll of life is taken.

Her women have flung aside without a thought all the happy pre-occupations of peace, and from the hospital ward to the munitions shed, from the milk-cart to the motor-'bus, have given themselves without stint to ungrudging and brilliantly successful labour, while their hearts are broken by the loss of the men who have made their world.

Her whole industrial life has been revolution-

ised. Her skilled labour in the shipyards, the arsenals, the factories and the mines; at the loom, the lathe, the desk and the forge, has given its right arm, and put aside its most treasured privileges. England has poured out her wealth for the allied effort by thousands of millions. She has drawn her products from every habitable place on earth, and thrown them into the pool.

She has indeed flung into the breach for the freedom of the world, not her possessions simply, but herself, her immemorial heritage, her treasured citizenship, the commonwealth of nations that constitute her empire—her heart and mind and soul!

CHAPTER III

The Service of the Empire

I

"Can you think of the British Empire," cried Burke, "without a *Sursum Corda?*"

To us this word is more filled with light than it was even to the orator who spoke it. For, indeed, there has never been an hour when we could cry "lift up your hearts" as we could in the day when out of the horrible night of the War's origin,

"Black as the pit from pole to pole,"

came the flaming response of a world-wide Empire to the need of the Mother-country.

The secret of the rally which amazed us all, stunning the Central Empires with its staggering and unexpected blow, and thrilling Britain and the Allies with its swift and deliberate loyalty, lies hidden in that word "Mother-country." Our men from the Dominions, the Crown Colonies, and the Dependency of India are sons, not subjects, of the Home-land.

The tie of Empire was loose—the strands were of silk and would snap at the strain of war. The Dominions would stand aside to save themselves.

India would leap at the chance of rebellion when Britain's hands were more than full in Europe. So the German publicists argued—those leaders who have lost their war, not from failure in military preparation, but from the lack of simple elementary imagination—from blindness to realities that were freely revealed to babes.

The word "Empire" sent the German leaders to their text-books. They saw the Egyptian, the Assyrian, the Babylonian, the Greek, the Roman, the Spanish Empires based on military domination. They rooted their own theory and practice of Empire in the idea of rule thrust upon unwilling subjects. But the British Empire eludes that definition. It is not in that sense an Empire, but is rather a league of self-governing nations, blended with Dependencies that are in training for self-rule—a colossal experiment in international government with a minimum of compulsion and a maximum of freedom.

So the silk strands did not snap. They were stronger than the iron bands of Germany. Germany did not destroy the British Empire; she gave it a new revelation of itself. She expected disruption or at least apathy, and she discovered young nations shoulder to shoulder in one unbreakable rank. She proclaimed our decadent softness—and whole armies of conquering virility sprang upon her. There is a grim poetic justice in the historic fact that it was Canada at Ypres which broke the last German efforts to reach the coast of Calais and menace the British shores.

The Central Empires deserve our undying grati-

tude for initiating by their challenge a new era of unspeakable possibility for the Empire. Among the elements of the new world that sprang into being in August, 1914, none is more dramatic or of greater moment than the flame that fused our Commonwealth and Nations into one. The hammer of Thor in the hands of the Teuton has welded the Empire's noble metal into a single sword of tempered steel. She is now compact of—

> "Iron dug from central gloom,
> And heated hot with burning fears,
> And dipt in baths of hissing tears,
> And battered with the shocks of doom
> To shape and use."

The miracle of what has already happened to the Empire in the War is only surpassed by the wonder that the future holds.

II

We look first at the story of the three years that now are history.

The call of the great adventure for the defence of the Empire, for the freedom of small nations, for those principles of loyalty to the given word, of even-handed justice and of personal liberty which are the secret of the British Raj, had no sooner sounded than every province of the Empire sprang to arms. English and Boers, Scots and Canadians, Irish and Indians, men of Australia, New Zealand, Newfoundland and Africa, even the little island peoples of Fiji and Niué and the Cook Islands, offered their lives.

Within eight weeks of the declaration of War Canada had concentrated, equipped and embarked from Quebec a voluntary army of 33,000 men—the largest force that had ever crossed the Atlantic at one time. These were the men who bore the brunt of that first diabolical gas attack. Lord French has told us of that day: "The Canadians held their ground with a magnificent display of tenacity and courage; and it is not too much to say that . . . these splendid troops averted a disaster which might have been attended with the most serious consequences." That force, as has been truly said, "at Langemarck barred the way to the advancing Germans and saved the day for the Empire, the Allies and the world."

Canada's recruiting went steadily on. No sooner had the First Division sailed, than a second was organised. From her new-born cities, from the shores of her lakes and the banks of her splendid rivers, from her lumber camps, her wheat-fields, her mining camps and her industrial centres, men of every province rallied, trained, sailed and fought. By the spring of 1917 over 400,000 men had enlisted in the Canadian Forces. At Neuve Chapelle, Ypres, Festubert, Givenchy and on Vimy Ridge, in every place where the call has come, their splendid manhood has lifted modern war to a higher level of clean, heroic sacrifice. Similarly, her wealth has been given in supplies of grain, cheese, horses, salmon, munitions, clothing, even submarines for the use of the Allies; and she has lavished money and service in hospital work. Before the War no shells had been made in Canada out-

side the Dominion arsenal at Quebec. By August, 1916, over 20,000,000 shells had been shipped to Europe. They have more than won the twenty-three V.C.'s and numerous other distinctions that have been awarded to them.*

The smallest of our self-governing Dominions, Newfoundland, has sent its regiment which heroically won its hill-top nearer to Constantinople than any other effort in the tragic experiment of Gallipoli, while its Naval force has patrolled the Ægean and the North Sea. Newfoundland has made her offerings for the supplies of the troops and even equipped and dispatched her aeroplanes for the Front.

The strong-limbed, clean-cut, high-tempered breed of Australia has thrown into the War an army almost as great as that put into the field for the South African War by the whole Empire, and twice as large as our initial Expeditionary Force of August, 1914. Alongside that army, which volunteered for foreign service, came the battle cruiser *Australia* and the three smaller cruisers, *Melbourne, Sydney* and *Brisbane,* with flotillas of submarines, torpedo-boats and destroyers. The Commonwealth has equipped, armed and transported its own men and has met the costs of commissariat and medical supplies, beside shipping and maintaining many thousands of her famous horses. In the Navy, the infantry, cavalry, artillery, mechanical transport, camel corps, and miners' corps and in new munition factories in her different States,

*Up to June, 1917.

Australia has undertaken every kind of war-service open to her.

Right across the entire breadth of the world, New Zealand with its passion for freedom thrilled with response to the need of Belgium. From a population equal only to one of England's great provincial cities, her fiery breed of men have thrown themselves into the fray with clear vision of the issues at stake and of the sacrifices demanded. General Smuts has told us that of her total population of one million, about one hundred thousand entered military service in the War—men who, coming from the newest and least traditional of lands, shed their first blood within range of Sinai, and as they recuperated, faced the inscrutable features of the Sphinx. The gifts of over three million pounds from a million people, over and above War Loans of over thirty millions, and vast contributions of food-stuffs, reveal the steady spirit in which civilian New Zealand backs up the efforts of its troops.

The Australians and New Zealanders together created and baptised in sacred blood a new name that stands for the most glorious heroism of the War—the name of "Anzac,"* associated for all time with the adventure of Gallipoli. Their long and ever-growing list of military distinctions represents but barely their heroic courage.

The first task of the South African Government, under its soldier statesman, General Botha, was to reduce a miniature rebellion which had broken out under the stimulus of bribery and intrigue. She

* The Australian and New Zealand Army Corps.

then turned to the conquest of German South-West Africa. A British South African Army of 58,000 conquered this area of a third of a million square miles, and then garrisoned the country. Some of the South African Army joined the Rhodesian and East African colonists, together with English, Australian, Canadian and Indian troops, to reduce German East Africa, now almost completely subdued. These vast territories when completely reduced will, with the Kamerun country conquered largely by the West African Frontier force, place some million square miles in the hands of the Allies.

Some seven thousand men have crossed to England from South Africa for the fighting in Europe, with a general hospital, ambulance and aviation squadron complete. Over 40 per cent. of the adult male white population of Rhodesia are enlisted in African forces, while many from all over the subcontinent have come home to enlist in England itself. The great chiefs like Khama, Lewanika and Griffith have sent money and offered men for war, while many thousands of African negroes are working in the ports of France to help our Ally there.

The mere catalogue of the imperial service given by the smaller outposts is endless. From Malta, Hongkong and Shanghai, from Zanzibar, Mauritius, Sierra Leone, from Fiji, and other islands of the Pacific, from Aden, from Guatemala (where out of a total population of eighty-two, forty volunteers travelled to England at their own costs—£65 per head—to volunteer), from the Argentine,

men have come in spontaneous homage to give what service is in their power. The strangely potent appeal of the cause is illustrated curiously in Malaya, where contributors to a squadron of sixteen aeroplanes include British, French, Dutch, Jews, Armenians, Chinese, Japanese, Indians (of numerous races) and Malays.

But when all is told the strangest story of all remains—one that reads like an Arabian Night's romance, yet is the solid history of our own day. No one living can have remained unmoved by, or will ever forget, the thrill of emotion that quickened the pulse of England when India offered herself with Oriental lavishness.

"What orders from the King-Emperor for me and my men?" wired the gallant Maharajah of Rewa. The message was symbolic of the spontaneous offer of the Principalities and Powers of that vast and varied congeries of peoples grouped under the name of India.

Germany had recorded her expectation that in a European war, England would need to send additional troops from home to hold down restive India, in the event England called from India more than three-quarters of her British troops and more than a half of her native army. The Nizam of Hyderabad placed £400,000 and his regiment at the disposal of the King-Emperor, the Maharajah of Mysore a third of a million pounds, the Gaekwar of Baroda the whole resources of his State. Maharajahs rivalled one another throughout India in their help; while the Aga Khan, the spiritual head of eighty million Moslems, issued a direction to those

millions to serve the Empire, and then volunteered to serve as an infantry private in the Indian Expeditionary Force. And there are few pictures in history like that of Sir Pertab Singh, the aged chivalrous Indian prince-warrior, who had sworn that he would not die in his bed, riding through France at the head of his men. From the "steel-wire" Ghurkhas and from virile Sikhs, from independent border States like Chitral, Nepal, Bhutan and even from Thibet offers came pouring in upon the Viceroy.

The offering of India was first hailed with pelting roses at Marseilles, and was sealed in blood when the Indian troops captured Neuve Chapelle. From that day to this in Gallipoli and Salonika, in Palestine, Mesopotamia and in Africa, India has given of its best in the strange war of the sahibs across the "black water."

III

Such a superb epic of spontaneous loyalty, offering its all for the defence of such a heritage, calls for a statesmanship for the future that will lift its conceptions of Empire to the level of the opportunity. In so far as the event has eclipsed our wildest hopes of what the Empire might do, our thought for its future should surpass the conceptions of its past.

Purged by the fire and annealed by the discipline of the War, the Empire is called to realise a deeper freedom within itself, and to help to confer a wider liberty on the world. When our Imperial power

endeavoured to quench freedom in America, America smote us back and broke from us—and we learned our first great lesson. To-day, America has joined us once more to help to establish that democratic liberty in all the earth.

When freedom rose again in Africa after the great Boer War, we made a daring experiment in liberty, a precedent that grows the greater as its consequences reveal themselves in history. For, when the history of the War and of the Empire are retold a thousand years hence in the perspective of history, there will be no more arresting or significant figures in the story than those of General Botha and General Smuts. To-day South Africa has rallied to help us, not only by her arms, but through the just and lucid vision that has—in the speeches of General Smuts—raised the whole level of our thought of the War and its issues to a loftier elevation.

New organisation will be needed to meet these new needs and prepare for the building of a still stronger Empire. Imperial Conferences will regularly discuss the principles governing the foreign policy of the Empire. The new strands of union will reveal themselves in the warp and woof of government. But behind and beneath the organisation, creating it and therefore more important than it, is the spirit, the temper that the constituents of the Empire bring to it. And the loftiness and strength of that spirit will grow with the growth of our educated free democracies—and will grow in the measure of the qualities that have called its members into the War, *i.e.*, in the measure of its

equal justice, of its fidelity to the given word, and of its peoples' knowledge of liberty.

The War has knit us closer to incalculable millions of men—far beyond any unity of rule in history; tall, bearded Sikhs and short, sturdy Ghurkas, Indian girls on tea plantations, brown labourers in Bombay factories, Maharajahs in palaces, outcasts in fetid hovels, African men on veldt and in forest, men on the wharves of Hongkong and Singapore, men from the coral islands of the South Pacific to the edge of the Arctic ice, from the limitless plains of Australia to the snows of Klondike, millions who are now irrevocably linked with the destinies of our world-scattered Anglo-Saxon tribe.

The call of such an Empire to-day, in the face of our new experience of unity, is not so much to imitate as to initiate, not to follow precedents, but make them; not to ride easily in the track of the pioneers, but to share their venturesome spirit and go beyond them. For we start where they left off. Their foundations are superb; we should disappoint them if we built no greater than they had dreamed.

There is a scale of plan and action which will make our *raj,* not a competing Empire in a race for power, but—as it were—a congeries of nations standing everywhere for equal liberty among all peoples—a unit in a world-wide super-national league that will discrown tyranny, heal divisions, cleanse the earth from cruelty, establish knowledge and set up freedom in all the earth.

It may be a distant dream. Yet it is held more

fully now than ever in history; and the War by breaking up the past, revealing the possibilities of the future, and by releasing vast spiritual resources, has made it the one object to which men can worthily devote their time and talent.

CHAPTER IV

The Sea-Scape

I

They come crowding up from the grey horizon; they swing away again over the edge of the world —all day and every day, "come wind, come weather," some five thousand of them between any Sunday and Sunday.

They are of every size and shape, and of all the nations outside the Central Empires—great, striding cargo liners that tread down the Channel like a City merchant in Cheapside; dingy, reeking "tanks" that flounder heavily through spray and spume; solid cattle-boats, stolid coasters, stiff high-bowed tramps like hay-wagons, and ocean-hounds that fly the seas with a shearing rush.

They carry the variegated supplies of Western Europe and its armies—bringing the needed stuff from every port that trades with man to-day. Their drab hulls are stuffed with more romance than were the argosies of Venice or the square-rigged ships of Tarshish. Those hulls have been loaded by Sudanese, Egyptians, Arabs and Indians; by Greenlanders, Chinese, Japanese and Africans, by Singhalese, Spaniards, Samoans and Papuans.

During the War* the Mercantile Marine has successfully carried eight million men and ten million tons of war material. One million sick and wounded have been transported. Fifty million gallons of petrol; over a million horses and mules; one hundred million hundredweights of wheat; seven million tons of iron ore; £500,000,000 worth of goods have been exported. We have lent France about six hundred ships and four hundred to Italy.

Every meal that we eat, every time that we array ourselves with clothes, from our morning coffee to the soap for our bath, from the rubber on our heels to the tie around our neck, we live and move and act only by and with things that have, in the last resort, come to us on the broad backs of these merchant-ships. Through them comes every grain of food that the soldier eats, every garment that he wears, every rifle, gun, cartridge and shell. They have gathered dates and oil from Basra, wheat from the Argentine, rice and cotton from India, rubber, cocoa and precious metals from Southern America and Africa, copra from coral islands. The brain reels and imagination staggers as one tries to visualise the infinite variety, and the world-range of the scope of the merchant-man.

But wonder rises to awe when we recall that today these men are the target at which the Central Empires are aiming the whole might of their naval power organised with feverish concentration and directed with consummate skill. To slay this mer-

*Up to July, 1917.

chant-sailor and destroy his works they have invented super-submarines and mine-laying submarines; they have flung overboard all law and humanity; they have alienated what friendship or tolerance was left to them in the neutral world, and have brought up against them the armed wrath and might of America.

And the German instinct here is right in recognising in the merchant-sailor his supreme enemy. From Yokohama and Hongkong, Bombay and Vancouver, the Argentine and Lagos, to Liverpool, Rouen, and Marseilles; Naples, Port Said and Archangel, these men and their ships *are* the allied line of communication. To destroy them is to cut the jugular vein of our War. The German dread of the merchant-sailor has made them defy the law of nations and of humanity, and follow a path of demoniac indiscriminate destruction in their futile effort to break him. Yet even by defying all restraint of law, they have failed and will fail. Without them the War would be over in a month. But the channel of life-blood is not cut.

These grey-eyed men, with their tanned, seamed faces that know neither fear nor brutal hate, are, it is true, again and again blown into the water by torpedo and mine. But when picked up by a friendly destroyer and brought to port, they straightway sign on in another ship and are out again on the old long trail. So long as there is a ship to sail they will sail, and the shipyards of the world are seeing to it that they shall not be without stout decks under their feet.

It is a curious thing in our history, recurring

through its every stage, that this strange breed of high-spirited, hard-handed, far-sighted, cautious, cunning, silent merchant-sailors have been a rock on which our enemies have broken. Under Drake they smashed the Armada; they foiled the Dutch; they baffled Napoleon; they defy the Teuton. We realise how great they were when we remember what they did under Drake. To-day, facing more terrible and hidden foes who strike in the dark without warning, they are just as great in all the essentials of daring, resource, and humanity as were their heroic Elizabethan forbears.

II

The line is not cut, again, because of that astonishing miniature Armada of craft of every sort that serves as the fringe of the great fleet. There are thousands of these ships manned by over fifty thousand men. There are Lowestoft and Grimsby trawlers who know every shallow and pit-hole within a score of leagues, men as sea-crafty as a thousand years of sea-blood can make them; men as implacable as death, because, as one of them said, "I see *Lusitania* sprawlin' all across the sea all the time." There are sea-dogs from the ports of the West Country, from Plymouth round to Cardiff, and from the Clyde to the Shetlands, and round to Glasgow and the Irish ports, who know the sea as a gillie knows his moor. Men who have always tracked the herring now hunt the elusive submarine. The word comes in to them that a new nest of mines has been laid and they turn out over the

grey waste to divert the traffic of the seas, to sweep up the nest, smash the mines and come back to smoke and yarn on the jetty while the commerce ships "go on their lawful occasions." They are at this "job" by the shores of Tyre and Rhodes, they see the sun come up over the plain and mountains of Troy, they sweep the seas in which Paul was wrecked and where Ulysses's galley-men stuffed their ears. These men are blockading Germany, keeping lonely vigil, "tossing on their weary beats," keeping the seas from the Pentland Firth to the Fjords of Norway and across the Channel, boarding steamers in a high gale when the spray freezes in an icy coat and the sight is blinded by the blizzard, sleeping two hours and on watch twenty, and out for forty days on end.

III

In the last resort, however, the merchant-men sail in unending procession and the small craft sweep the seas securely because of that dread invisible force on which the freedom, not only of the seas, but of the world depends. Within a week of the opening of war, German ocean-borne commerce did not exist. The dread of our Navy had wiped it off the map. In that unlovely waste of Northern waters the Fleet lies, so powerful that its very presence there in leash holds the German battle fleet, which cost its authors £300,000,000, paralysed in its lair. Line behind line are the Grand Fleet and its attendant craft of every kind that man has conceived for modern war upon the sea, manned

by men who have proved under the ultimate test of sea-battle their superb skill and courage, their adequacy to their tremendous responsibility. Again and again, times without number, it issues forth and sweeps the North Sea, looking in vain for an enemy who finds "discretion the better part of valour."

The British Navy has throughout worked in co-operation with the powerful allied Navies of France, Italy, Russia, Japan. They have later hailed with joy the support, already so powerfully felt, of the American Navy.

These Allies will themselves readily acknowledge that the hazard has ultimately and largely rested on the British Grand Fleet and its auxiliaries. The German Fleet knows that at any hour of the year it can meet our Fleet in the North Sea. The prize that would follow a successful battle is stupendous—the greatest, the most glittering the world has ever offered to any nation, and the prize toward which Germany has pressed these many years. She does not, since her failure at the Jutland fight, attempt to take it. On the contrary, all her above-water ships, whether men of war or merchantmen, are in port; while the British ships take the seas when and where they will. If we fought a uniformly successful battle every morning for the freedom of our sea-traffic—with the loss of, say, three or five merchant-ships, we should be dazzled, and the world would wonder at the miracle. That the result is achieved without the battle, and as a matter of course, is a greater and not a smaller achievement.

IV

It is for this reason that the story of the war at sea is so swiftly told. Within twenty-four hours of the opening of war a situation was established which has continued unchanged, though emphasised and illuminated by battle-incidents and phases of pressure and resistance. The war at sea divides itself roughly into five phases. The phases are (1) the clearing of the seas of German commerce and raiders; (2) battle with the enemy's home fleet; (3) blockade of the enemy's ports; (4) securing the lines of communication; and (5) bombardment in amphibious war.

At the very outset German outposts fell like ripe fruit into the hands of the Fleet—Samoa, which was seized to the joy of its inhabitants by the New Zealand expedition; "Neu Pommern" in the Bismarck Archipelago taken by the Australians; the wireless stations in Togoland, South-West Africa, the Caroline and the Pacific Islands and in German New Guinea. Striding the seven seas the Fleet sank *Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse* and *Cap Trafalgar,* and captured *Spreewald.* The *Emden*—the bravest and most sporting foe that Britain has yet met in the War—was rounded up and shattered off the Cocos Keeling Islands. The *Goeben* and *Breslau* by well-contrived flight escaped to Constantinople with dire results on the trend of the War. Von Spee won the only German victory over British ships in the battle that sent *Monmouth* and *Good Hope* to the bottom and threw the lightly armoured *Glasgow* out of the fight.

The triumph was short. When Sturdee on December 8th sank the *Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, Nürnberg* and *Leipzig* off the Falklands this running chase was practically over. The *Dresden* was destroyed off Juan Fernandez three months later, while *Prinz Eitel Friederich* was interned and the *Karlsruhe* disappeared. The *Königsberg,* hidden in the windings of the Rufigi river, was smashed by the shallow-draft monitors on July 11th, 1915.

We were severely rapped over the knuckles for the blunder of doing patrol work with cruisers when that brilliant German submarine officer, von Weddigen, with three successive torpedoes, sank *Aboukir, Hogue* and *Cressy* in thirty minutes.

Early in the War, on August 28th, 1914, came the sharp, dramatic little fight of the Bight of Heligoland in the very jaws of the enemy's ports and far from our own base. Heligoland, that triangular little plateau of rock which Lord Salisbury presented to Germany, had been fortified at a cost of ten million pounds as, so to speak, the bows of the German Navy, butting into the North Sea. Behind the sixteen-mile-wide channel that separates Heligoland from the coast lie the ports and anchorages, the submarine, Zeppelin and destroyer bases. The game from our side on that occasion was one of baiting the German Fleet to come out and fight. The *Arethusa* ran through the haze with her pack of hounds—the swift destroyers—at her heels and sides. German ships began to loom in the grey mist. The fighting was terrific, with the sharp bursts of flame, the roar and shriek and crack of the raging shells, with hits to the credit of both

sides. The destroyer *Liberty* dashed in under the very guns of Heligoland to get at the German cruisers in harbour. At last the *Lion, Invincible, New Zealand* and *Queen Mary* rode in, and, while avoiding the enemy submarines, drove the surviving German ships to cover with an enemy loss of three light cruisers, two destroyers and some twelve hundred men, the British losses totalling sixty-nine men.

A second "sea-scrap" of real importance was the Dogger Bank fight whch intercepted the third attempted raid on the East Coast. A futile raid on Yarmouth had been followed by a ghastly "tip and run" bombardment of Hartlepool, Whitby and Scarborough with an unholy slaughter of women and children, a wreckage of houses and churches. On January 24th, 1915, Admiral Beatty's patrolling squadron sighted four German battle cruisers with light cruisers and destroyers making for the British coast. The Germans turned tail and Admiral Beatty gave chase. The *Blücher,* shattered by shell and rent by torpedo, carried her 15,000 tons to the bottom of the North Sea, while the *Seydlitz* and the *Derfflinger* disappeared in the distance in flames.

The one outstanding decisive sea-battle of the War up till the present fell on May 31st, 1915, when Sir David Beatty's battle cruisers at 2.20 p.m. sighted the enemy out and in force. A sea-plane reported the German battle cruisers falling back—probably on stronger forces. Should Beatty fall back on our Grand Fleet which was out further north, or engage the enemy, who was evidently in superior force? At great risk he determined "to

engage the enemy in sight." For fifty minutes, from 3.48 to 4.38, Beatty was engaged heavily in a running fight south-eastward in which he lost *Indefatigable* and *Queen Mary*. Then the German High Seas Fleet appeared and Beatty with Evan Thomas, who had joined him with his four battleships, swung north-west to draw the whole German Fleet toward Jellicoe and the British Grand Fleet.

With the arrival of Jellicoe and his Fleet the range of the battle became so tremendous and its conduct so complex that no eye can really measure it or follow its movements. Its main feature can be put into a sentence. The great battleships, moving southward, maintained a titanic bombardment of each other, screened by squadrons of light cruisers and flotillas of destroyers, while the German Fleet as a whole sought safety in a flight, brilliantly protected by able torpedo tactics. A spreading haze and then nightfall hampered the British pursuit. The black night was pierced by the long white spears of the searchlights under which the destroyers looked like "black beetles on a tin-plate." Every now and then hell spouted up in the death-blaze of a stricken battleship. When dawn returned all that remained of the German Fleet had crept away to Wilhelmshaven, while the British Fleet scoured the seas in search of the enemy or of the seamen who might be floating on the waves.

The main difference in the general situation created by the Battle of Jutland is that before the battle the British Fleet reigned unchallenged, but challengeable: after the battle it reigned challenged, and—by the issue—now unchallengeable.

The Navy's help in co-operating with land forces draws the eye whenever it occurs. We have seen brilliant examples of it, largely aided by the flotilla of flat-bottomed torpedo-proof monitors—wallowing gun-platforms—off the Belgian coast, on the shores of Syria and, up in the Adriatic, on the edge of the Carso. But the classic, tragic example is that of Gallipoli, first by brilliant work on the hopeless task of forcing the narrows against land forts, sunk torpedo tubes, floating mines and submarines; and then in co-operation with the landing, fighting and finally withdrawing Anzac forces. The Navy never failed in the whole of that strenuous luckless venture. The defensive lesson of that conflict was the reiteration of the peril, from the action of submarines, in which battleships lie when stationary.

V

If it is impossible to visualise the work of the Navy itself with its amazing complexity of defence and offence, how will the mind contain, in addition, even the simpler elements of the work that goes to her making and her equipment?

In mile after mile of shipbuilding yards, amid a deafening eternal rat-tat-tat of mighty hammers on colossal plates, the hulls of super-Dreadnoughts tower aloft, overshadowing the lean sinister shapes of growing destroyers and mysterious hybrids that blend venom and speed in terrifying proportions. It is here that a million tons were added to the Navy in the first year of War, and still the total

rises as fresh ships are invented to meet the new needs.

For the tale of her equipment, the maze of her factories and stores a whole volume is demanded to do credit simply to the efficiency of production and distribution. When a ship goes to sea she must have on her all that her thousand men can properly need through months of absence.

From the ends of the earth the food, clothes, comforts, the whole equipment and furnishing of the men of all the ships of the Fleets, are brought into a city within a city that hides itself within walls on the banks of a river in Britain. In that place tarpaulins, oil-skins, jumpers, boots hang in unbroken line beyond the range of the eye. The leaf of the Navy's tobacco is sorted here, and stored in its air-tight tins. Millions of pounds of chocolate are made every year. The machinery for the strengthening and the comfort of the men whose watchful eyes are on sleepless outpost between us and our vigilant enemy radiates from that centre.

VI

Whether we look to the detail upon which this Navy depends or to the world-wide and world-making functions that it performs, or to the way in which it shapes its work to new baffling problems, we find the wonder growing with our knowledge.

We see at the one end her commissariat, complete to the last bootlace, her building yards straining to the last ounce. At the other end we see her submarines nosing their way through Baltic

ice and Mediterranean islands, her destroyers ferreting in every creek from Cape Horn to the Zambesi and from the Shetlands to Corfu. We watch her blockade growing sterner and sterner, carried out sleeplessly over stormy, blinding wastes of water. We see her mine-sweepers tirelessly cleansing the ocean ways that the commerce of the world may go by without let or hindrance. We watch her carrying the men and munitions of all the Allied nations. Her *rendezvous* are at Salonika, Port Said, Dar-es-Salaam, Basra, Toulon, a hundred other centres in all the continents and many of the islands of the world. She "mothers" our liners across the danger zone. She holds the vast arc of the steel siege within her wide arms and by the grip of her tireless fingers. We know that if she failed the British Empire would fall to pieces. And yet we sleep sound in our bed o' nights!

In her wise, far-sighted brain, her humane chivalrous heart and in her firm grip there lies—as there has lain through these years—the safety of those resources which will, when the War has been brought to a triumphant end, have secured the freedom both of the waters and the lands of the world.

CHAPTER V

The War on the Land

The forces of fourteen nations, including many millions of men of the European, American, Asiatic and African peoples, are wrestling on the soil of three continents on nine fronts* covering thousands of miles.

To attempt the study of such a war in detail numbs the mind by the multiplicity of its factors and the bewildering variety of its forms. Yet the colossal dimensions of the conflict—not only its sheer bulk, but the enormous forces of the human spirit that it has called into action—give it, when looked at in perspective, a certain staggering simplicity. If we climb to some sufficiently lofty ridge of contemplation we get a view in which the details are lost and the outlines become clear; an outlook from which we can determine the main tendencies of the fight, and—it may be—can catch, through the mist and smoke, some sufficiently convincing glimpse of the goal to which it is surely moving.

* The nine military fronts are: in Europe, the Western, the Eastern, the Italian and the Balkan; in Asia, the Caucasian, Mesopotamian and Palestinian or Eastern Egyptian; in Africa, the Western Egyptian and German East Africa.

I

The true test of the fortune of war does not lie finally in the occupation of territory, the capture of fortresses or the penetration of lines. These things all have their measure of importance. But victory does not rest on geographical facts. Ultimate victory lies in putting the enemy's armed forces finally out of action. The promise of victory lies in the possession of the instruments that will achieve military decisions of that order.

Germany's *initial* plan in the War rested on that sound strategical principle. The scheme was, first, to put the forces of France out of action by a swift, irresistible, decisive blow, and then, to swing round and smite Russia. The plan failed. The Marne broke it. That is why the Marne is the most decisive battle in modern history.*

The Aisne witnessed the initiation of the *second* plan, which was less sound in principle, but was forced on Germany by the situation as a whole. This plan was to break through on the northern sector of the west (while holding the rest of the front) and by a double movement to take Paris from the north and threaten Britain from Calais and her sister ports. Essentially it was a plan to pin the Allies down on the West and the East; and —from behind superior fortifications—by action based on stronger artillery and man-power, to secure a decision by smashing through or turning their lines, and subsequently containing sufficiently large forces. The enormous superiority in muni-

* See Chapter I.

tionment that the Central Empires then held gave sufficient hope of the success of this plan—though at the best, as they knew, victory would come at far greater cost than the initial "hammer-blow" scheme would have entailed.

How near the second plan came to success on the West the Allied peoples were never told, and even now have hardly understood. Only the men who survived the unspeakable strain of the battles of Ypres know—and they cannot express it. The German forces stormed against a British Army of less than a fifth of their own numbers, and with still less adequacy in artillery. Like a thin steel wire the line from Nieuport to Arras curved under the awful onslaught of shell and gas and infantry attack. Monitors came to the rescue on the coast. The waters of the Yser were poured over on the German forces. The tension was so terrible that the line was all but snapped. Yet, by that miracle of spirit which inspires free men in supreme emergency, the high-tempered steel held. We do not yet as a people understand how near we then lay to disaster. But history will carve in immortal relief the record of the glorious heroes who saved us in those days. "Their bodies were our defence while we wrought our defences."

The Kaiser, who had personally watched this contest with intent interest, put up his field-glasses and turned away. The *third* phase opened.

Baffled on the West, the German tide—though it covered Belgium and most of industrial France —surged Eastward. The Central Empires threw their strongest forces upon Russia. Smitten at

Tannenberg, the sweeping Russian advance in East Prussia and Galicia had been checked, and now ebbed. Hindenburg's breakers swept Russia from Galicia. Warsaw fell, and with the fortresses went guns that Russia could not spare. By consummate skill, she again and again extricated her armies when it seemed that the German forces had all but gripped them in its giant trap. But Poland was submerged. Russia was constantly in retreat, but a military decision was never actually reached. It did not seem, however, even when Kitchener told an incredulous England that Germany had shot her bolt on the Eastern front, that the unequipped armies of Russia could stay the German forces till they had enclosed Petrograd and Moscow. Yet this happened. Russia at last stood her ground. The third plan had failed.

So there opened the *fourth* phase, a tremendous and confused wrestle, swaying to and fro, that finally extended in one vast arc in the East from Riga through the Carpathians to the Black Sea.

While that prolonged wrestle between Russia and the Austro-German forces was going on a new phase of the war developed. To grasp its significance involves recalling the objectives that Germany has in the War. These certainly on her own showing included the seizure of French colonies and large and strategically decisive parts of the Near East. Whether Germany ultimately win the War in the West or the East, or, as the evidence leads us to believe, nowhere, her real ambitions lay in the Near and Middle East. They covered that plateau which bridges the stride from

Europe to Asia, and, still more, that wonderful plain between the Tigris and Euphrates, which to the eye of the prophetic irrigator waves with potential harvests. But if her hand grasped at the Middle East, her eye ranged farther east across Persia through Afghanistan to Delhi, and down the Euphrates and Tigris to the Persian Gulf. The policy that went under the name of "Central Europe" really planned a road from Antwerp and Hamburg to Alexandretta and Basra, and ultimately overland to Western China and the confines of India.

These oriental ambitions, then, directed a *fifth* phase in the vast operations of the war.* This phase involved "hacking a way through" to Constantinople. In this direction also all looked bright. Turkey had entered the war in October, 1914, lured by the dangling of glittering prizes along the north coast of Africa. Bulgaria, secretly a member of the Central Alliance, was preparing to join in the stabbing of Serbia and to share the plunder. Our diplomacy in Greece and elsewhere was confused and paralysed by many subtle influences. Our lines on the Gallipoli peninsula held up a Turkish force, gave Bulgaria pause and probably relieved Egypt of a strong Turkish offensive, but failed to compass its immediate military objective. The control of the advance into Mesopotamia moved from muddled daring to unmitigated disaster. Egypt stood on the defensive. In South and West

* These phases are set in numbered order for the sake of clearness. They are not strictly separate or chronologically divided. They overlap both in time and geographically.

Africa alone we had achieved victory. Indeed, if we look through the long list of great Generals of all the nations involved on either side, the only names that stand for unbroken success are those of General Botha and his fellow-soldier and statesman, Lieut.-General Smuts.

In the meantime, at Loos and elsewhere, we attempted advances for which our preparations were still (as the event proved) inadequate. Following the German blockade of Britain and France, our own sea blockade was confessedly from the political necessities of the time and our desire to regard international law in relation to neutrals incomplete. For instance, cotton still entered Germany through neutral ports to be converted into high explosives.

The wealth of our man-power was, it is true, potentially decisive. But though our armies were trained with what would, in advance, have been described as incredible swiftness, neither they nor their munitions were yet available in adequate force for the field. Worst of all, while the Central Empires had throughout acted under a unified High Command, the Allied military effort was on the whole, uncorrelated, without unity, either of aim or direction—a series of brave but doubtful experiments inadequately conceived, carried through sporadically at high cost and backed up ineffectively.

Looked at as a whole, these drawbacks were inherent in a situation in which Powers that had directed their thought for decades to the problems of such a war, and that were fighting on interior

lines in a war made on their own initiative and at their own time, met other Powers fighting on external lines, divided from each other by enormous distances and by enemy and neutral territory, whose separate High Commands had never envisaged as a whole the problems of strategy, diplomacy, man-power, munitionment and economics.

On the surface, then, the situation seemed promising for the Central Empires; to eyes looking beneath the surface, however, for the factors that had still to be brought into play on either side, the growing forces revealed themselves on the side of the Allies. A shrewd comment on the German situation was made in the middle of the period of three years and ascribed, with we know not what accuracy, to Hindenburg. The comment was "Brilliant—but without a future." The Allied position was of precisely the opposite order—gloomy, but with glowing light on the horizon. Vital and decisive factors such as the growing balance of man-power, the rising curve of munition production, the growing unity of aim and control, the depth of economic resources, the moral, and the opinion of the jury of neutral nations outraged by Prussian war-methods—all pointed to a gradual, but in the long run complete, restoration of the Allied situation.

The benefits of preparedness are most obvious at the beginning of a war. By the end of the first year these benefits began to lose their effect, and throughout the second year the advantages of lack of preliminary preparation began to be visible. Fully conscript nations are powerful in a short

war, but if they can be held through the early days their very preparedness creates drawbacks. As their man-power diminishes and their men become stale and lose moral, the flower of less military peoples comes freshly into line. That is precisely what began to happen in 1916 and is developing with increasing momentum. We have already traced* the amazing process by which a free nation and Empire have brought inexhaustible, and from a military point of view virgin, resources of splendid quality into play. The increasing pressure that these resources have brought to bear has gradually and insensibly, but completely, revolutionised the military situation.

The imperceptible and yet overwhelming thoroughness of that revolution has come over the writer in a curious and unexpected way in the preparation for writing this book. It is absurdly elementary, yet may be for that reason worth describing.

Spread out on the floor of the room, like a great sheet, are over sixty columns of print containing a complete diary of the outstanding events of every day of the war. Every day for the whole of the three years since July 23rd, 1914, has its record often of events on as many as five fronts and in two seas in the one day. The first swift impression of the serried rows of facts is of terrible, incessant hammer-blows of devastation—a thousand days of cumulative slaughter. The second impression—arrived at by taking each section and each column

*In Chapters II, "The Transformation of England," and III, "The Service of Empire."

of days separately and studying it in detail—is of the bewildering complexity and tortured chaos of it all. The third impression came when the detailed study of each column had been followed by an hour spent in a swift running of the eye down the whole story of the thousand days of conflict. That impression is striking and remains more enduringly convincing as it is revised and checked. Quite plainly in the actual events day by day it is proved there that the period of attack radiating from the Central Empires gradually slowed down, a period of equilibrium—falsely called "stalemate"—followed, and ushered in the third period of increasing concentric pressure from without. In a word, the balance of power, and with it the decisive initiative in war on the battlefield itself, has now passed permanently from the Teutonic League to the Allied Powers. The only constant factor throughout is the unbroken and increasing pressure of the Allied Fleets upon the enemy.

This phase of increasing concentric pressure then is the situation in which the War stands at the end of three years, with a local weakness on the Eastern front which time and the increasing momentum of America will overcome. The dry evidence of the diary of the War, reinforcing the knowledge that we have of our own increase and the German relative decrease in man-power, munitions and moral, gives cumulative evidence of the cracking-strain produced by this pressure.

We may take the beginning of February, 1917, the date from which the German unrestricted submarine warfare began, as a starting point. That

warfare is itself an authentic index of the desperate straits of the German High Command. The simple catalogue reads like a Book of Doom for the Central Powers and for tyranny everywhere. On February 24th General Maude took Kut; on the 25th the Germans retired on the Ancre; on March 8th the French opened their attack in Champagne which, with the concerted British pressure, forced the great German retreat of March 17th. Meanwhile on March 11th Bagdad fell, and on the following day came the Revolution in Russia. At the end of March the British made advance toward St. Quentin.

On April 5th the German submarine warfare harvested its just fruit—America declared war on Germany. On April 9th the broad attack of the British from Lens to Arras was opened, followed a week later by the French blow from Soissons to Reims and in the following week by the British advance on the Scarpe. The month of May opened with united pressure by the British and French, followed on May 14th by the Italian offensive which in a week achieved another step on as difficult a terrain as Europe can offer.

On June 7th the British victory of Messines, of which the great military significance will appear more clearly as time goes on, placed Germany in a position where she must waste men or retreat. Underneath all that record of advances lies the fact of wastage hidden under that phrase "considerable artillery activity." Above all that record is written in clear letters the story of aerial domination which

has by the same act given eyes to our artillery and blinded the enemy.

On June 12th King Constantine abdicated. Greece broke with Germany. Precisely a fortnight later the first American contingent—the advance guard of millions of men, thousands of aeroplanes and hundreds of ships—came like the shining spearhead of an irresistible doom. Simultaneously the first signs of the new offensive of the Russian Revolutionary Army under Brusiloff began its smashing work upon the Austro-German front. Never in all history has there been such a diary of six months filled with the crash of despotism, the rise of armed freedom and the power of the united purpose of free peoples.

There will be still the sway of geographical swinging movement on the frontiers of the war, particularly on the Eastern front where the thrice-welcome earthquake of revolution has for the time unsettled the whole control in both civil and military government. But, if we take a long view and retain our sense of perspective, we can see that the hour is coming with the certainty and steadiness of destiny, when the new decisive phase of the War will arrive as a herald of the end. The defensive lines of the Central Powers will visibly crack. They will break and crumble under the combined effects of internal weakness and pressure from without. When that process truly begins it must issue swiftly either in a rolling up of the lines or in a return to open warfare—or both. The one thing that is certain at that stage is an early military decision.

The only cause for military defeat of the Allies now might be through a people's submission to the blandishments of the Central Powers—through strikes or panics—or through the surrender of one of the Allies. In which case the remaining Allies would have to carry the War through to victory, as we did in the Napoleonic wars. The world would otherwise be plunged, not back into barbarism (for history has no parallel to what is threatened), but down under a scientifically conceived tyranny enthroned on force and crowned with cruelty, with its centre in Prussia and its chains on the limbs of the world.

To smite with all our force now up to and through the breaking point of the enemy's line—to smite undistracted by economic or racial division at home, and with united, firm and increasing purpose among the Allies—this will bring to an end this vast calamity of war and open the vista towards which the world wistfully and eagerly looks, the new era of peace, built on justice and liberty.

CHAPTER VI

Why Must We Go On?

I

There was an hour when we might have stood aside from the War.

It was the hour when Germany made two proposals to Great Britain. They were that we should stand aside while France was felled to the ground and robbed of her colonies, and while Belgium was outraged and flung into the ditch on the world's wayside.

We might in that hour have emulated the neutrality of the priest who, seeing a man felled and robbed, "passed by on the other side," or of the hireling who, seeing the wolf come, fled and left the sheep. We might have done that, and have gone down to ruin amid the crash and fall of all Western civilisation that must have followed the inevitable triumph of Germany.

Actually, however, our Foreign Secretary, the most cautious and peace-loving statesman in Europe, branded such a bargain as "a disgrace"; our Prime Minister stigmatised the proposal as "infamous." We declared war.

We went deliberately to war, then, with no ambition save to "vindicate the principle that small nationalities are not to be crushed" and to keep our plighted word. Reviewing the situation three years later, we can with satisfaction remember that what made the Good Samaritan "a neighbour" was his policy of active intervention; that the whole distinction between the Good Shepherd and the hireling was that the Shepherd was a combatant even to death. And, for once at least in history, the wolf was unmistakable in that Prussian military caste which has Germany in its maw and has stood growling at the door of European civilisation for two generations.

In that hour Britain accepted the responsibilities of an Island Power without claiming its immunities. It did so because this is not the usual war-tragedy of a fight between two "wrongs" (or even between two "rights"). It has been from the beginning a fight between right and wrong, between freedom and tyranny, for the governance of the world.

We might have stood aside. But we did not. We could no other. That being so, the first and obvious and irrefutable answer to the question "Why must we go on with the War?" lies in the fact that we have put our hands to the plough. In the light of history, in the sphere of moral duty, in the eyes of our children and our children's children, what matters primarily is, not the length of the furrow, but that we should plough it through to the end. The great ends for which we made our vows at the outset of the

War are not yet achieved. They were never so near to being secured as at this hour. In men, in munitions, in freshness, in elevation of ideal, and in *élan,* the Allied cause is in more splendid condition after three years of war than at any previous time. We must, then, see it through. As Mr. Lloyd George has declared*: "This War will come to an end when the Allied Powers have reached the aims which they set out to attain when they accepted the challenge thrown down by Germany."

II

The Allied aims, then, are not limited to the negative objective of smashing the German military machine. The Allied aims are essentially constructive. But our first military objective is destructive, because the path for humanity is blocked by a monstrous evil which must be destroyed.

Greatheart, we remember, began by slaying the Giant who swaggered across the path mouthing at the shuddering women; though his aim throughout was to lead them into the City. But he could not take a single step toward the City till he had disposed of the enormous and murderous bully who stopped the path. We must go on with the War with our thought on the more distant but greater goal.

What, then, is that goal? What lies beyond the War?

There lie before us at the end of the War vast

* June 29th, 1917, at Glasgow.

perils of reaction and unparalleled possibilities of reconstruction and renewal. The world is in the crucible. Until good can come out of the War if those constructive aims are kept steadily before our minds throughout the time of fighting.

We are authoritatively told that "the chief aim of the Allies is to assure peace on the principles of liberty, justice and inviolable fidelity to international obligations."* The aims involve—as was said at the beginning—securing the rights of small nationalities—the restoration of Belgium, Serbia and Montenegro, the evacuation of the invaded territories in France, Russia and Roumania with fitting reparation, indeed, the reorganisation of Europe on the basis of that principle of nationality.

Through the democratisation of Russia by her wonderful revolution, which will increasingly be seen to be the greatest event of the War, and through the entry of America into the War the whole vista of renewal of life after the War has been indefinitely expanded. Our ideals have been lifted, simplified and unified. The mists have cleared from the goal, though they may still hang thick in the valleys of decision that lie between us and the end.

Among other things we can now see what has for so long seemed impossible, that we may, after all, be able to drive a wedge between the German people and the Government that has hypnotised and enslaved them to its will. If the people are indeed as a whole inoculated and impregnated with

* The Allies' Reply to America. January 10th, 1917.

the spirit of Prussianism, that path of hope may be closed, at least to this generation. Yet we may take heart if only a single man of mark like Scheidemann, the German Socialist delegate to Stockholm, can open his heart on his return as he did in *Vorwärts* for June 24th, 1917:—

"We go abroad to hear the Fatherland cursed on all sides, consigned to the lowest depth of hell, as the stronghold of blackest reaction, whilst England, France and America are praised as bringers of light and freedom. We hear Wilhelm II. described as a tyrannical war fanatic, and Bethmann as his pliable, cunningly worked tool, and we have to make out that things are not half so bad. We wished to pursue and carry to a conclusion the peace policy initiated in December. . . . I came in Stockholm to the unalterable conviction that this cannot be done until Germany is completely democratised. It is not our enemies, but our friends—alas! so few out there—who keep on repeating to us: 'The time has come at last when you must alter your home political conditions.'"

Those "political conditions," however, remain essentially unaltered. The issue is overwhelmingly clear. Three absolute autocracies (the German, Austrian and Turkish Empires), in all of which the representatives of the people have no control over the Executive Government or the armed forces, are now arrayed against three mighty Republics—France, Russia and America—against Italy, the land of Garibaldi and Mazzini, and Britain—the "crowned republic," which is the

historic ally of liberty and the traditional enemy of reaction wherever it may be found, and against the small nationalities. The two systems of democracy and despotism are in mortal conflict for a clearer issue and on a more tremendous scale than at any hour in history. If those tyrannical Empires emerge from this War with their military power unbroken democracy is doomed. Unless we win the War "government of the people, by the people, for the people" will perish from the earth for many generations. But on the day when we win and the Prussian autocracy is pulverised, responsible government and the freedom of the peoples will be established more widely and strongly than men have ever dared to dream.

This democratic issue was stated, in words that will never be allowed to die from memory, when President Wilson led the Congress of the United States of America to the declaration of war against Germany:—

"We are now about to accept the gage of battle with this natural foe to liberty, and shall, if necessary, spend the whole force of the nation to check and nullify its pretensions and its power. We are glad, now that we see the facts with no veil of false pretence about them, to fight thus for the ultimate peace of the world and for the liberation of its peoples, the German peoples included: for the rights of nations great and small and the privilege of men everywhere to choose their way of life and of obedience. *The world must be made safe for democracy.* Its peace must be planted upon the trusted foundations of political liberty. . . . We are but

one of the champions of the rights of mankind. We shall be satisfied when those rights have been made as secure as the faith and the freedom of nations can make them."

III

What is it, behind the autocracies themselves, that makes it doubly impossible to call a truce with such an enemy? What is it in the conduct of the War that reveals a spirit which we know would, if it conquered, make life unbearable? The acts of our enemies are themselves the most eloquent answer to this question.

To trace the trail of Prussian and Turkish infamy through the War is a nauseating task. But the entirely unrepentant persistence of Germany's military caste in "hacking its way" through all the laws that have lifted humanity above the level of the wolf-pack forms a principal reason why we must go on with the War. We must, therefore, swiftly review this story of cumulative degradation, and then pass to a less septic subject.

The story begins with Austria's smashing of Serbia at the instigation of Germany for a crime committed by an Austrian subject. It continues with the confessed aim of snatching the colonies from a stricken France and of riding over the body of Belgium. It proceeds swiftly to the reign of "frightfulness" in Belgium and invaded France, a chronicle of loot, lust and the slaughter of civilians unparalleled previously in the history

of modern war*—though now overshadowed by the inglorious eminence of Germany's ally in Armenia.

In military operations themselves, the use by the German forces of old men, women and children as a screen between themselves and the Allied Armies, and the treacherous use of the White Flag, formed a fitting preparation for the introduction of the torture of poison gas and of the flame-throwers. That the use of poison gas should have actually been forced upon us by Germany is one of the things that it is most difficult to forgive. And it *was* forced upon us, for to refrain from using it when the German Army was doing so was to give our own men up to death.

The slaughter of women and children and other non-combatants at Scarborough by the raiding warships of Germany; the murder of Nurse Cavell for acts which might conceivably have justified a light sentence on a man, but would not have been held as doing so in the case of a woman under any civilised Government; the indiscriminate destruction of civilian life by the futile and blind Zeppelin raids; the deliberate torpedoing of hospital ships; the German submarine crew jeering at the struggles of the drowning passengers of the torpedoed *Falaba;* these and similar acts received their immortal crown of cruelty when the *Lusitania* was sunk with over a thousand civilians—American and British. That such an act should have been heralded in Germany with joy, and should have been commemorated by the striking of a medal, is

* See Chapter I

one of the numerous indications of perverted moral view that have made it intensely difficult to discriminate (as we have desired) between the non-representative military rule of Germany and its people as a whole.

Leaving aside the general run of other detailed atrocities like the shooting of hostages, the burning of towns, the destruction of historical monuments and the poisoning of wells, three barbarities stand out as so eminent in criminal bestiality, as poisoning so completely the very springs of international life, that their total effect has been to change the very history of the War. These three atrocities are (*a*) the massacre by Turkey, as Germany's ally and with Germany's defence, of over a half of the Armenian people, together with the cruel starvation of the Syrian population, particularly in the Lebanon; (*b*) the deportation into conditions of slavery of thousands of Belgian men, women and girls; and (*c*) the unrestricted indiscriminate destruction of shipping of all nations.

These cumulative enormities have done what the Allies could never have achieved—they have affected the alienation from Germany of enlightened neutral opinion throughout the world, and have drawn into the War the most detached, the most peace-loving, the most patient, the most democratic of all peoples.

The atrocities committed during the War by Turkey in Asia Minor, Armenia, and North-west Persia are, considered in the dry light of historic fact, an effort to exterminate a whole nation with-

out distinction of age or sex. The evidence* has been closely scrutinised by some of the most critical and judicial, trained historical minds in Europe and America. The facts are established beyond any cavil. They are as incontrovertible as they are diabolical. They would be incredible if they were not true. They are vouched for by German eye-witnesses. Indeed, the scenes described in the protest sent by four German missionaries in Aleppo (October 8th, 1915) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Berlin may stand alone as an ineradicable condemnation of acts that cry aloud for a just and terrible retribution.

"In the compounds next door to our school," say the German educational missionaries, ". . . there are girls and women and children practically naked, some lying on the ground, others stretched between the dead and breathing their last breath!

"Out of 2,000 to 3,000 peasant women from the Armenian Plateau who were brought here in good health [their husbands and fathers had already been massacred], only forty or fifty skeletons are left. The prettier ones are the victims of their gaolers' lust; the plain ones succumb to blows, hunger and thirst. . . . Every day more than a hundred corpses are carried out of Aleppo.

"All this happens under the eyes of high Turkish officials. There are forty or fifty emaciated phantoms crowded into the compound opposite our school. They are women out of their mind; they

*The treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. Documents presented to Viscount Grey by Viscount Bryce laid before the Houses of Parliament as an official paper. (Hodder & Stoughton, 1916.)

have forgotten how to eat; when one offers them bread, they throw it aside with indifference. They only groan and wait for death.

"See," say the natives; "Taalin el Alman (the teaching of the Germans)!"

"The German scutcheon," continue the missionaries, "is in danger of being smirched forever in the memory of the Near Eastern peoples. . . . We know that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has already received detailed descriptions of what is happening here. *But no change has occurred in the system of the deportations.*"

Multiply the horrors of that scene by the thousandfold. See men shot and hacked to pieces by the ten thousand. Picture women with child driven with whips along the road till they fall by the roadside and die in giving birth to babies who are at once slain. Imagine gentle trained nurses —graduates of European and American hospitals (including that glorious Armenian woman known throughout the Near East as "the Florence Nightingale of Turkey") driven out into the country to die, raped under the lust of their loathsome masters, or, if plain, beaten and starved to death. Stand while the little four- and six-year-old boys of a mother are flung into a brook to freeze while the mother suffers the filthy violence of the mullah. Set as a background to the whole bleeding massacre, burning villages and hillsides strewn with mangled corpses. Pile every imaginable barbarity into a reeking mountain of bloody cruelty and lust till the very flesh quivers with agony and anger, and you will still fall short of an historically accurate

view of the realised horrors of that systematic deportation and butchery.

"See," say the clear-eyed natives of Aleppo, as quoted by the German missionaries; "See, the teaching of the Germans!"

Of the second immense atrocity, the deportation of Belgian men, women and girls, there is little need to give details. The simple fact of carrying off into slavery the non-combatants of a people whose one sin is that they have defended their existence as a nation and their honour as a member of the community of nations, is a crime whose despicable inhumanity stands out in simple relief —a stark menace to all those small neutral peoples whose proximity to such a neighbour is now a daily peril. We have only to imagine the same thing happening to our fathers, mothers, sisters and daughters to see that the whole act is a calculated crime on a national scale for which there must —if justice is still to live upon the earth—be a tremendous reparation—though no power can reconstruct the broken homes or give back the shattered lives. In case we should hear that the fact of slavery has been mitigated by the humanity of the masters, it is well to have before us an extract from a letter written by a deported Belgian workman to his wife:—

"I can only write one line. Heaven knows whether it will ever reach you. We are working here by hundreds, often under fire. We are ordered to demolish the whole forest here, as the Germans need wood for saps. The forest where I am work-

ing has been fenced with electrified barbed wire, and escape is impossible. German sentries watch us continually, and are ordered to fire if one of us gives the slightest sign of escape or rebellion. We work under atrocious conditions ten and twelve hours daily. The food is rotten, and we never have an evening meal. *Death would be much preferable* if it was not for thinking of you all."

The third atrocity on a wide and continuous scale, the unrestricted sea-murder of neutrals by submarine, has had effects in history which are themselves sufficient witness that they blend with curious completeness barbarity, tyranny and arrogance, with a final threat to the national identity of any people anywhere. It was the submarine policy, entered on by Germany as a last desperate gambler's throw in defiance of the neutral opinion of the world, that brought America into the War.

"We are accepting this challenge of hostile purpose," President Wilson declares, "because we know that in such a Government following such methods we can never have a friend; and that in the presence of its organised power, always lying in wait to accomplish we know not what purpose, there can be no assured security for the democratic Governments of the world."

The cup of terrorisation would seem thus to be filled. The ostracism of the German Government by America completes and ratifies the world's verdict on her moral leprosy.

It might, however, almost have been hoped that

the spectacle of the revulsion of America would have led to some re-examination by Germany of her own accepted practices. But Germany's "frightfulness" is as unrepentant as it was in her advance. We find her High Command still issuing army orders that may stand as a picture and parable of her whole attitude towards life. The date is that of the retreat on the West in the spring of 1917. The place is Baucourt.

"*March* 11*th*.—All unused wells and watering ponds must be plentifully polluted with dung and creosote soda. Sufficient dung and creosote soda must be placed in readiness beside the wells which are still in use."

We can imagine a symbolic picture by a G. F. Watts, a picture of Germany, dung-fork in hand, at work upon the well-springs of human life, and underneath the picture as a title her own words: "Plentifully polluted."

Why must we go on with the War?

It would be far better to die out of the world than to live on in it while the Apollyon that has slaughtered and raped its way across Armenia and Belgium and the oceans of the world still triumphantly straddles across the path of humanity.

IV

A drawn peace with such a foe as this would spell the ruin of the world.

It would involve the ruin of the British Empire. That Empire, by flinging itself in the path of Germany at the beginning of the War and

thus foiling her plan, has earned the high distinction of being the focus of her fiercest hate. Any peace based on less than Allied victory would be, for the British Empire, "a pact of servitude," and would (as Mr. Lloyd George has said) end in our own destruction, just as a similar pact with earlier Goths and Vandals broke up the Roman Empire. Australia, Canada, South Africa, the Crown Colonies, our bright jewel of India, would all fall under that hideous yoke or perish in separate conflict. There would close in words of tragedy a glorious chapter in history that is now only begun; and the endless good which the British Empire may bring to mankind as one strong pillar in a world-temple of free democracy would never be performed.

This certainty of our pending destruction following on a German peace is no dream. It is the inevitable outcome of their ambition and our resistance. "Things are what they are, and their consequences will be what they will be; why, then, should we seek to be deceived?"

For the sake of the future of our Empire we must go on with the War till we have conquered Germany.

"I believe," says General Smuts, the apostle of the highest ideals of that Empire, "I verily believe that we are within reach of priceless and immeasurable good, not only for this United Kingdom and group of nations to which we belong, but also for the whole world. It will depend largely on us whether the great prize is won in this War, or whether the world will once more be plunged into

disaster and long years of weary waiting for the dawn. The prize is within our grasp if we have the strength of soul to see the thing through until victory crowns the efforts of our brave men in the field."

Again, a drawn peace with such a foe would spell the ruin of Europe. We are sometimes told that to continue the War will be "the suicide of Europe." The precise contrary is true. To stop the War before the Prussian power is broken would literally be "the suicide of Europe." For Europe is the first home of that great and ever-growing tradition of simple honour in the relations of human life—that tradition and habit—that code of loyalties and faith which stands between us and barbarism. Europe stands for mutual recognition of the individuality of others, the free progress of all in equality of opportunity in the wholesome rivalries of the arts and sciences of life. Europe recognises the supreme benefits of diversity, the sacred inalienable rights of personality. Europe stands for the principle that the general will and conscience of the world should be discovered and expressed, not by the dominating power and voice of one, but by the freely expressed representative voices of all. She may have stood for these things imperfectly, but she has been the historic citadel of these precious permanent principles. And a German victory would be the end of all that, for Germany's rulers are the sworn and active foes of all these things.

A drawn peace with such a foe as this whose acts have just been described would end the splendid

world leadership of France in all the arts of civilisation. It would plunge Russia, newly emerged from an ancient tyranny, back under the more galling yoke of a modern and scientific despotism. It would close in darkness and plague the new dawn of Italy's progress. It would sound a knell of permanent despair in the ears of the smaller nations of Europe. The word "independence" would have no meaning. A drawn peace would, I repeat, be in tragic truth "the suicide of Europe." It is true, indeed, that Germany looks to a new Europe—"a new Europe"—in Bethmann-Hollweg's words—"free from the trammels of the balance of power," or, in other words, with the dominant power in the hands of Central Europe. For the sake of the Europe of the past and of that reconstructed, united, freer and greater Europe of to-morrow, we must fight on.

V

There is a wider, vaster issue still. Beyond Europe lies Asia. The nations of the Far East, Japan and China, chin in hand, watch the terrific conflict. The one has proved an active ally, whose Navy has given priceless service and whose munitions have been the turning-point of Russia's fortunes. The other has, in sheer disgust, broken with Germany. But if Germany emerged triumphant from this fight, all Asia would see militarism issue in victory from a supreme test.

China stands to-day at the cross-roads. She is the greatest Republic on earth, with the largest

coalfields alongside the greatest ironfields in the world—with a mighty and sturdy population careless of death, able to march long distances on little rations, the raw material of tremendous armies outnumbering united Europe. The issue of the future peace of the world lies more and more with those nations—China, Japan and America—which fringe the Pacific Ocean, whither the struggle for dominance now veers. It is only using the language of plain fact to say that the triumph of Germany by its effect on the Far East would issue fifty years hence in new Armageddon with its centre in the Pacific and its circumference everywhere—a world-war that would dwarf even the present conflict. A drawn peace would be the dreadful herald of still vaster and more terrible wars. It would spell the ruin of the world.

For the sake, then, of the future peace and progress of the world we must carry the War to a victorious conclusion.

VI

Indeed, at last, it comes home to us all in the simple things that make life free and happy or shackled and wretched.

The regulation of life under military and official control to-day in our own lands we accept because of the War. But the thought of that permanent detailed direction of our actions by officials backed by military power is simply unendurable to men who have centuries of liberty in their blood. If we win the War we shall be free to fling it away with

a huge sigh of relief. If we do not win the War we and our children for generations will live and die under the lash of militarism. And what is now the lash of a whip will then be a scourge of scorpions. That lieutenant at Zabern cutting down with his sabre the cripple who—he thought—was laughing at him is a simple, true picture of the rule of Prussian militarism. Triumphant it would pervade the world.

For if Germany wins the War either one of two things will happen. Either we knuckle under—we lie prostrate and feel the tentacles of the octopus reach out over us all and strangle our freedom and our life; or we prepare to overthrow her power later, and through all our life we shall stagger on under a stiff and unbending conscription and a permanent and tremendous burden of armaments. Britain would suffer most of all, for her lines of communications are over the earth. Cut them *anywhere* and her limbs drop off. To a Navy ever growing greater and greater against the shipbuilding of a prosperous and triumphant Germany, she would need to add an army on a super-Continental scale. Our freedom, our wages, our food, would all be reduced to pile up a burden of guns and bind it with chains on our back. The vista is of a permanent, intolerable nightmare.

VII

In very deed we are in the midst of a surgical operation on which the health of the whole world depends. To all who would say "Stop the War

now" the stern facts to-day reply: "We know as well as you do how horrible war is. But to stop fighting now is to bind the fetters of war on the world for ever. To fight through to victory is to set us all free."

The way of the War has been longer than we had dreamed it could be. It has reached and passed the term set by Lord Kitchener and him alone at the outset. We have walked for over three years with War. We have been into the dark gorges of disappointment and humiliation. We have walked with bleeding feet up the flinty, thorn-strewn path of sacrifice. We have passed—some of us again and again—through the valley of the shadow of death. And the end is not yet.

But the light breaks on the horizon—not the delusive glimmer of the mirage, nor the fatal flame of the will-o'-the-wisp—but the authentic light of the sure promise of victory. With the fresh forces of America newly thrown into the conflict, with the balance of strength in men, munitions and moral steadily turning in our direction; with the enemy's resources falling in number and in spirit, the certainty of a near approach of triumph is with us.

One age is dead, another is waiting to be born. Our sons and brothers have given their lives for that new age; they have died for the triumph toward which we struggle. Through them we and the world of the future have indeed been "bought with a price." We must fight on till the fruits of their sacrifices are garnered—till their death is swallowed up in victory.

We are called by the greatness of the eternal issues for which we first went to war, by our own heritage of liberty, by the sacred offering of life itself made by our heroes upon the altar of freedom—we are called by the oppressed peoples who still groan under tyranny, and above all by the glory of the goal that is set before us—to spend our whole force in carrying the War to a triumphant issue.

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